UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECE/1361
19 February 1998

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Fifty-third session
(Provisional Agenda items 3 (a) and (b))

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECE REFORM

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. This note reports on the implementation of the ECE reform, one year after the adoption of the Plan of Action by the Commission. It focuses on two main components of the implementation: institutional and substantive. It also provides information on ECE publications in compliance with the request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

2. The Commission may wish to take decisions on the following issues highlighted in the note:

- The renaming of the Meetings of Experts related to WP.29, (para. 10);
- The renaming of the Meetings of Experts related to WP.7, (para. 11);
- The composition of the Bureau of the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, (para. 14);
- The format of the report of the PSB related bodies, (para 15);
- The guidelines for the priority ranking of PSB activities (para.17);
- The review of ECE publications (para 33).

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I. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

3. The institutional aspects of the reform are outlined in Chapter III of the Plan of Action and are related to the Commission, its Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the secretariat.

A. The Commission

4. The organisation of the 52nd session of the Commission was already in line with the prescriptions of the Plan of Action in terms of the length of the session, the sequence of its segments and the time devoted to each of them. The 53rd session completes the implementation of the reform by further reducing the number and length of the secretariat's reports to the Commission.

5. The organisation of the economic debate on the first day will also be in line with the reform. This debate will address more topical issues than in the past, on the basis of the Economic Survey and of the theme of the annual seminar taking place on the eve of the session. Furthermore, it will have a format which will lead to an interactive debate, avoiding individual statements and involving, as keynote speakers, economists from the government, academic, banking and business sectors as well as from international organizations.

B. Principal Subsidiary Bodies

6. For their annual session following the Jubilee Session of the Commission, all PSBs had the implementation of the reform on their agenda. On the basis of a note prepared by the secretariat, they considered the issues outlined in Chapter III of the Plan of Action, in particular: the review of their related bodies, the dates and length of their annual session, the role and composition of their bureaux, the format of their reports and the management of the PSBs' programme of work. All the PSB Bureaux prepared the discussion on the reform and, for this purpose, met with the members of the Bureau of the Commission in charge of following their respective area of work.

1. Review of the PSBs related bodies

7. The chart of the intergovernmental structure annexed to this report presents the outcome of the review made by PSBs. It shows that the objective of the reform, which was to make this structure more homogeneous and transparent, has been reached.

8. A number of Working Parties have been abolished under the Committee on Human Settlements and the Conference of European Statisticians, and replaced by informal entities or meetings. A number of groups of experts have also been discontinued, while three new Ad Hoc Groups of Experts have been created: (on environmental performance, the revision of the TIR Convention and the Extension of European Electricity Interconnections). The review of

the bodies related to the Working Party on Gas has not yet been completed; the Committee on Sustainable Energy will do so at its 1998 annual session.

9. As a result of the review, the ECE intergovernmental structure now comprises: (i) Working Parties of standing character; (ii) Ad Hoc Group of Experts with a two-year duration; (iii) other entities meeting informally, with various denomination e.g. teams of specialists for the Timber Committee, ad hoc meeting for the Conference of European Statisticians, task forces for the Committee on Sustainable Energy, working groups for CEFACT, etc... .

10. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) decided to maintain the standing character of the Meetings of Experts under the Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles (WP. 29) and to rename them "Working Parties". **The Commission may wish to confirm this decision.**

11. The Committee on Trade Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) agreed that the Meetings of Experts under the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) keep their standing character. By analogy with WP.29, **the Commission may wish to rename them "Working Parties"; alternatively it may wish to create "specialized sections" of the WP.7, corresponding to the name of the former Meetings of Experts.**

12. The second option allows a certain flexibility, which might be useful as the pace of harmonizing, revising or extending norms and standards is different according to the technical areas addressed. If the Commission was to choose the second option, it could be applied to other Working Parties involved in normative activities, provided the Commission agrees.

2. Length and dates of the meetings

13. As requested by the Plan of Action, all the annual sessions of the PSBs will be held between January and September as from 1998. The PSBs have also reached the objective of a 3 day duration for their annual session, excepted the Inland Transport Committee which will do so by the deadline which has been fixed (April 1999).

3. PSBs' Bureaux

14. All PSBs have agreed that their Bureaux will have to fulfill the roles assigned to them by the Plan of Action. Those Bureaux which were limited to two or three members have enlarged their composition. Now the PSBs' Bureaux are composed of seven to ten members with a balance between the different parts of the region. One particular case is the Bureau of the CTIED which is composed of the President, one Vice-President and the Chairperson of the Working Parties related to the Committee. This facilitates the integration of new activities, particularly in the field of industry but in the long run, it may introduce some rigidities and hamper arbitration on various requests coming from the Working Parties. **Therefore, the Commission may wish to discuss this type of composition.**

4. Reports

15. The PSBs reports have been reduced in length. They focus on the main conclusion points and decisions taken as provided by the Plan of Action. At the same time, the reports summarize briefly the substantive debates and the information provided by the participants in addition to that contained in the documentation of the secretariat so that countries unable to participate in the meeting can benefit from a translated report. The Plan of Action has no provision on the format of the reports of the PSB related bodies. **The Commission may wish to request the PSBs to encourage the bodies under them to adopt the same format as for their own reports.**

5. Management of the programme of work

16. The plan of action requests the PSBs to rank all activities initiated or underway in order of priority. The PSBs have started to implement this decision but none of them has yet completed this priority ranking. This will be done before the meeting of the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work which is expected to take place in Autumn 1998, prior to the preparation of the next programme budget submission by the Executive Secretary. For each PSB, the priority ranking is being prepared either by the Bureau or by a task force specially set up for this purpose.

17. In order to have a common approach for this exercise, **the Committee may wish to provide the following guidelines:**

- the main categories of activities under each PSBs should not be prioritized, as they correspond to the strategic directions decided by the Commission and outlined in Chapter I. of the Plan of Action;

- under each main category of activities, the PSBs should establish an order of priority between the work elements, ranking from 1 to the total of these work elements;

- the timing of the activities related to each work element should be indicated: date of completion for activities limited in time, and date and frequency for recurrent activities.

18. As indicated in the Plan of Action such an exercise will lead to: (i) identifying those work elements which might be suppressed in case of unexpected resource constraints; (ii) opening opportunities to decide on possible new activities to initiate; and (iii) clarifying what are the activities effectively carried out in the course of the current and coming years.

C. Secretariat

19. The structure of the secretariat reflects the orientations of the Plan of Action: the Industry Division has been dismantled, the Division for Economic Analysis and Projections has been renominated Economic Analysis

Division. The Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities has been created. The Data for Economic Analysis Unit (IDEST) has been, for managerial reasons, attached to the Statistical Division.

20. By the end of May, the staff was redeployed in conformity with Annex I of the Plan of Action so that the resources foreseen for each sector were allocated to it.

21. This redeployment which affected some 30 staff members, involved a detailed review of the qualifications of staff on board so as to keep the negative impact on staff to a strict minimum. It was effected after consultations with Division heads, UNOG Personnel Service and the staff members themselves. The resulting staffing structure, provided to member States in July 1997, is given in Annex II.

22. It was subsequently necessary to re-distribute office space in order to maintain the physical integrity of each ECE Division. This involved the moves of some 75 staff members during the period June/September.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS

23. Through the examination of their respective programme of work, the PSBs have applied the substantive directions presented in Chapter I. of the Plan of Action.

24. They have also considered the provisions of Chapter II. related to cross-sectoral issues. In particular they have, to the extent possible, incorporated the cross-sectoral concerns in their programme of work, namely: the outlook for sustainable development, the mainstreaming of the gender-perspective, the special concern for economies in transition and the involvement of the business community.

25. The most important inter-sectoral activity carried out in 1997 was the Ministerial Conference on Transport and the Environment which took place in Vienna. The Conference was attended by 51 Ministers of Transport and the Environment and, in total, 300 delegates from 40 ECE member countries.

26. A Declaration, outlining a set of commitments for promoting sustainable transport systems in the region, and a Programme of Joint Action, containing a corresponding set of policies and measures to be taken at the national and international levels, were adopted and formally signed by 35 ECE member States.

27. In addition, two legally-binding agreements on specific areas related to transport and the environment were opened for signature. 22 countries have already signed the Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections; and 12 countries did the same for a new Protocol to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) of 1991.

28. In addition to the texts adopted, the Conference has succeeded in showing that reconciling transport and the environment is becoming a political priority. The follow up mechanisms cover both the national and the regional levels. For the latter, the ECE is requested to ensure an overall

monitoring of the Programme of Action through joint meetings of the Bureaux of the Inland Transport Committee and of the Committee on Environmental Policy, to which representatives of other European and worldwide institutions will be invited.

29. The first Joint Meeting is expected to take place in June 1998 in order to take stock of preliminary actions taken by member countries, in particular the designation of Focal Points and Lead Actors and to agree on its method of work and initial programme.

III. PUBLICATIONS

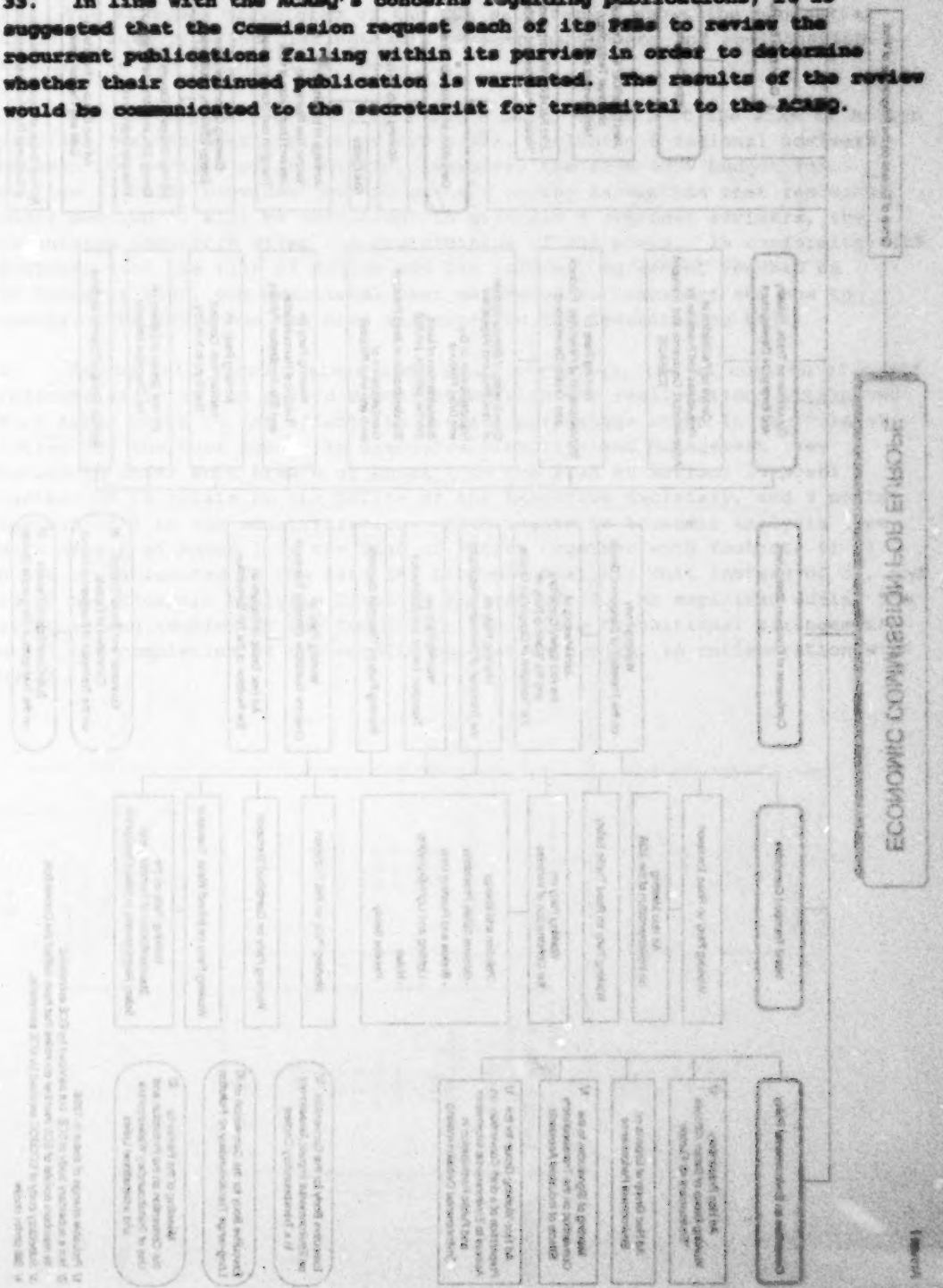
30. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in considering the budgets of the regional commissions, reiterated its view "that the secretariat should indicate to the relevant intergovernmental bodies the number, type, cost and audience of each publication, both recurrent and non-recurrent, the date intended for publication, the date when each publication was first requested, who requested such publication and when it was last reviewed and by whom". This information is contained in document E/ECE/1361/Add.1 in tabular form for each of the Commission's areas of activity based on the proposed publications programme for the 1998-1999 biennium.

31. In total there 97 titles in ECE's 1998/1999 publications programme, of which 39 are recurrent publications and 58 are non-recurrent. These publications are included as programme element outputs in the work programme approved by each PSB. The 98 titles relate to the following sectors of activity:

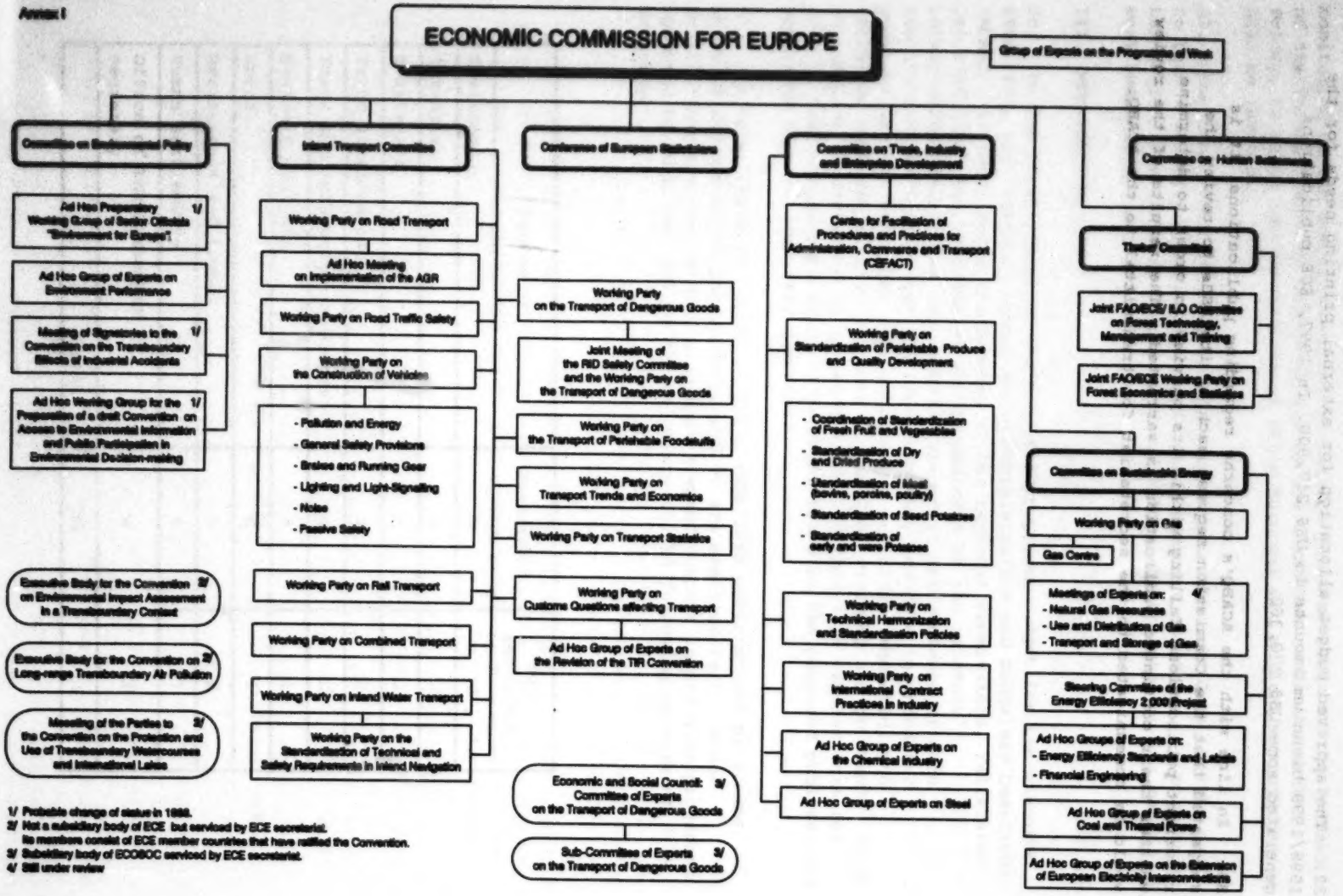
Sector	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Environment	4	16
Transport	8	10
Statistics	2	3
Trade facilitation	5	2
Trade and enterprise development	6	12
Economic analysis	4	1
Energy	0	2
Agriculture and timber	5	2
Human settlements	1	7
Office of the Executive Secretary	4	3
Total	39	58

32. The approved budget allocation for external printing needs for the 1998/1999 biennium amounts to US$ 217,900. In 1997, ECE publications generated some US$ 270,362.

33. In line with the ACABQ's concerns regarding publications, it is suggested that the Commission request each of its PSBs to review the recurrent publications falling within its purview in order to determine whether their continued publication is warranted. The results of the review would be communicated to the secretariat for transmittal to the ACABQ.



Annex I


ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
Group of Experts on the Programme of Work
Committee on Environmental Policy
Inland Transport Committee
Conference of European Statisticians
Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
Committee on Human Settlements
Timber Committee
Committee on Sustainable Energy
Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe" 1/
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Environment Performance
Meeting of Signatories to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents 1/
Ad Hoc Working Group for the Preparation of a draft Convention on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making 1/
Executive Body for the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context 2/
Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution 2/
Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes 2/
Working Party on Road Transport
Ad Hoc Meeting on Implementation of the AGR
Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles
- Pollution and Energy
- General Safety Provisions
- Brakes and Running Gear
- Lighting and Light-Signalling
- Noise
- Passive Safety
Working Party on Rail Transport
Working Party on Combined Transport
Working Party on Inland Water Transport
Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation
Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
Joint Meeting of the RID Safety Committee and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs
Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics
Working Party on Transport Statistics
Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Revision of the TIR Convention
Economic and Social Council: 3/ Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
Sub-Committee of Experts 3/ on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT)
Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development
- Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce
- Standardization of Meat (bovine, porcine, poultry)
- Standardization of Seed Potatoes
- Standardization of early and ware Potatoes
Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies
Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Chemical Industry
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Steel
Joint FAO/ECE/ ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training
Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics
Working Party on Gas
Gas Centre
Meetings of Experts on: 4/
- Natural Gas Resources
- Use and Distribution of Gas
- Transport and Storage of Gas
Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 2 000 Project
Ad Hoc Groups of Experts on:
- Energy Efficiency Standards and Labels
- Financial Engineering
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal and Thermal Power
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Extension of European Electricity Interconnections

1/ Probable change of status in 1998.
2/ Not a subsidiary body of ECE but serviced by ECE secretariat.
Its members consist of ECE member countries that have ratified the Convention.
3/ Subsidiary body of ECOSOC serviced by ECE secretariat.
4/ Still under review

ANNEX II

1 The attached organigram of the ECE secretariat shows the managerial lines of authority and distinguishes between management and coordination, substantive and support functions.

2. With an approximation of 0.5% for 1 post, Annex I of the Plan of Action provides for the distribution of 200 posts, including 8 regional advisers, between the sectors of activities. However, the 1998-1999 budget for section 17 (ECE) provides for 195 posts. On the assumption that resources under section 21 will be sufficient to maintain 8 regional advisers, the organigram therefore gives the distribution of 203 posts. In conformity with footnote 4 of the Plan of Action and the informal agreement reached on 20 December 1996, one additional post was added to transport and one to energy. The third one has been allocated to the Coordinating Unit.

3. Taking into account these additional resources, the allocation of staff reflects strictly the agreed distribution with two reallocations within two Work Areas which do not affect the overall percentage shown in the Plan of Action for the Work Area. In Executive Direction and Management (see breakdown under Work Area A of Annex I to the Plan of Action) 10 posts instead of 11 relate to the Office of the Executive Secretary, and 9 posts instead of 8 to the administration. With regard to Economic Analysis (see Work Area E of Annex I to the Plan of Action together with footnote 6) 11 posts are allocated to the Data for Economic Analysis Unit instead of 12, and 24 to the Economic Analysis Division instead of 23. As explained during the fifty-second session of the Commission, this is a transitional arrangement until the completion of the ongoing population project in collaboration with UNFPA.

ANNEX II

ORGANIGRAM OF THE ECE SECRETARIAT